

ARLINGTON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Survey #2: Priorities Outline

INTRODUCTION



Sustainable Transportation Goals and Principles

No plan can be achieved without a set of goals and guiding principles to inform decision making and set priorities. To be useful, they must be grounded in the real world, but also represent aspirations for better outcomes. Think of the goals as the roadmap for what the plan must accomplish over the next 20 years to be considered a success.

Arlington Sustainable Transportation Goals

Plan goals must represent those of the community for which they apply. The below statement – think of it as a vision – includes seven goals derived from the input of over 1,000 Arlingtonians received during a public process that included a public online survey, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, and feedback received during a virtual public forum.

Goals Statement

In 20 years, Arlington is a community that offers a transportation network that provides...

- Safe facilities for all users, no matter how they travel.
- Mobility options that meet the needs for diverse populations and people of all ages.
- A pedestrian first, walk-friendly environment.

- A transit rich environment with more local and regional options, improved connections, reduced travel times and enhanced user comfort for all who live, work and visit Arlington.
- A bicycle network second to none to connecting people in all areas of Arlington on dedicated, comfortable facilities.
- A “green” system that reduces the carbon footprint of all users and incorporates low impact design practices to reduce climate impacts and create a more resilient transportation network.
- A network that supports the local economy and business activity that balances customer and employee mobility with the movement of goods and services.

By ensuring the plan addresses and meets these goals, the sustainability of Arlington’s transportation network will be achieved through providing residents and workers with transportation choice and less reliance vehicular travel.

COMMUNITY SURVEY – PLAN PRIORITIES

Now that the Project Team has completed the Existing Conditions Fact Book and established the Plan Goals, we need additional input from the community to help identify plan priorities. Essentially, although the goals are in place, and all should be achieved over the next 20 years, some initiatives may be more important to the larger community, and from a Town Budget perspective, there is only so much money available to implement initiatives in any given 1, 10- or 20-year period.

Question: With the above in mind, please rank the following initiatives based on which YOU feel should be addressed first all the way to last.

- ☐ **Pedestrian Enhancements** including improving sidewalks Town-wide starting first with major connections to schools, public facilities and commercial activity centers (e.g. to and from Mass Ave), connections to the Minuteman Bike Path and transit services, and finally, neighborhood streets.
- ☐ **Safety Initiatives** that provide solutions to reduce conflicts between modes with a focus on high crash areas where pedestrian and bicyclist accidents have occurred.
- ☐ **Transparent Transportation Decision Making** where Town provides information about all transportation improvements under consideration, the status of each, and the funding available or needed to implement.
- ☐ **Bicycling improvements** Town-wide including additional bicycle lanes (separated wherever possible) to better connect neighborhoods to schools, transit (via bus, rail or commuter rail), more bike parking, and more.
- ☐ **Transit improvements** including advocating for more frequent service, improved stop amenities (e.g. shelters and seating), and additional services.
- ☐ **Driving Improvements** including strategies to increase vehicle throughput such as signal timing enhancements and coordination, smart signals, intersection enhancements, etc.

- ☐ **Greenhouse Gasses Reduction** through investments in technologies including EV charging stations, solar powered street lights and signs, and more.

PRIORITIES FOR EACH TRANSPORTATION MODE

The below questions ask your preference between two or three transportation recommendations/options. In instances where you believe all should be done, select the one that should be done first. Only ONE can be selected for each.

This being a long-range transportation plan, there will be many initiatives to address specific network improvements by mode (e.g. pedestrian, bicycle, vehicle, transit), and others addressing multiple modes through one initiative.

Key to the success of the plan is identifying priorities to help guide City staff and elected officials to implement (and fund) initiatives most important to the Town's residents.

Transit Improvements: If costs were relatively the same, would you prefer:

- ☐ **Increased Frequency:** For example, advocate for increased bus frequency on Mass Ave bus routes (# of buses per hour) to reduce bus crowding, but not speed up trip times.
- ☐ **Bus Priority Lanes** along all of Mass Ave (peak direction only) to reduce travel times, but not necessarily add more buses to reduce crowding.
- ☐ **Neither**, it's fine as it is.

Roadway Allocation: On roadways with limited room available for cars and bicycles, would you prefer:

- ☐ Prioritizing improvements for vehicle travel over other users (e.g. bicycles or transit) to expedite movement of cars.
- ☐ Include sharrows indicating shared lanes are shared amongst different users. (Please note that sharrows provide little safety for bicyclists as they share the road with vehicles)
- ☐ Prioritize adding bike lanes to provide a safe alternative to the car, even if vehicular congestion increases as a result due to less space allocated to their movement.

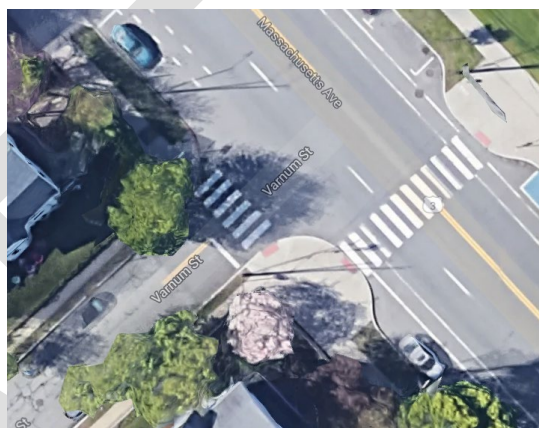
SUSTAINABILITY: In addition to reducing car trips, which other initiatives would you prefer to reduce climate impacts?

- ☐ Planting street trees along major pedestrian routes to reduce heat island impacts from pavement (and to provide greater comfort/shade to pedestrians during warmer months).
- ☐ Installing more EV charging stations to provide greater convenience for EV owners and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (at the local level).
- ☐ Incorporating low impact stormwater management techniques including rain gardens, bioswales and other "green" stormwater retention in all roadway and development projects.

CURBSIDE USE: To better manage competing users in commercial areas, and reduce temporary double parking (and added congestion,) would you prefer:

- ☐ - Replace some on-street parking spaces with dedicated TNC (Uber and Lyft) pick-up and drop-off zones, or TNC/Commercial Delivery hybrid zones near clusters of active uses (e.g. restaurants and theaters).
- ☐ - Replace on-street parking (in the am and/or pm peak only) to provide bus priority lanes to move buses through faster and reduce travel times.
- ☐ - Replace on-street parking in some locations with protected bike lanes (full day) to provide a safer facility comfortable to most riders.

[FOR QUESTIONS WHERE PEOPLE NEED EXAMPLES TO EXPLAIN WHAT WE MEAN, WE WILL INCLUDE PHOTOS.]



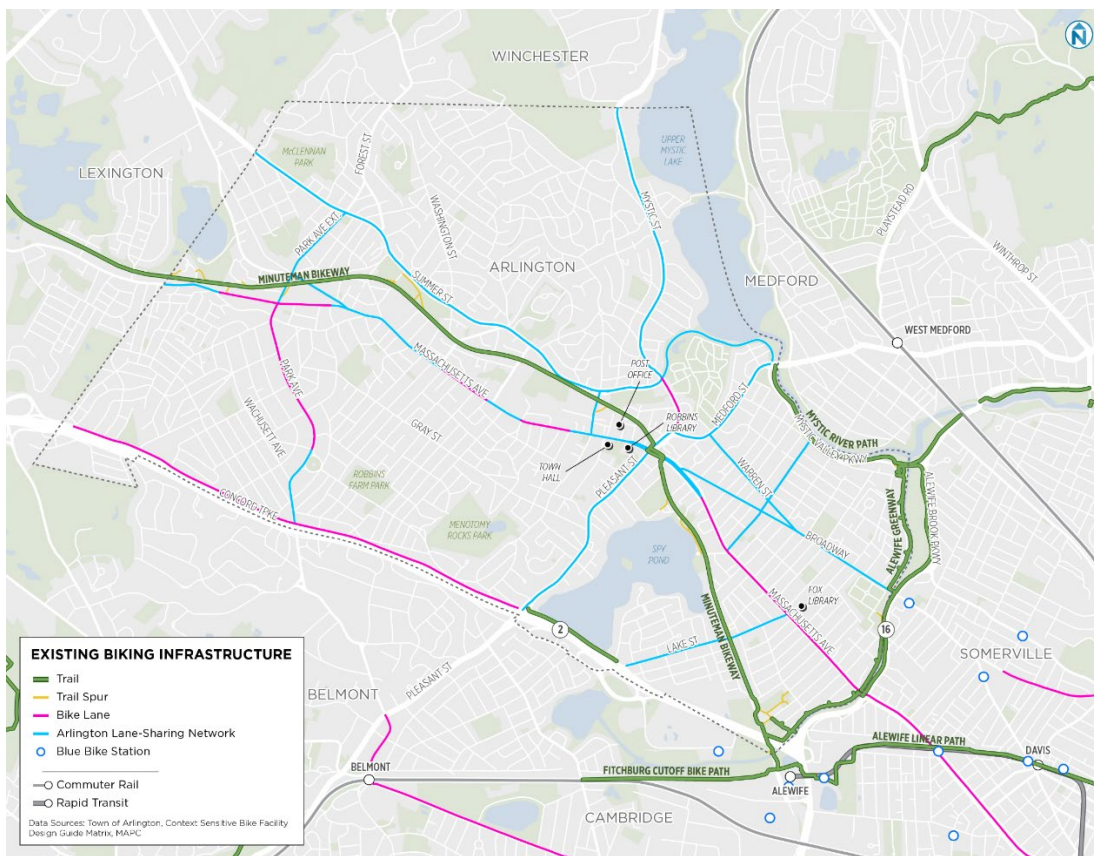
X.5. To enhance pedestrian safety, particularly in high crash areas, would you prefer:

- ☐ - Continue to focus on adding curb extensions/bump outs to provide greater pedestrian visibility and reduce crossing distance.
- ☐ - In addition to or in place of bump outs, install pedestrian activated flashing lights or in-pavement flashing lights, to notify cars when a pedestrian is crossing.
- ☐ - Install pedestrian-oriented lighting to call attention to pedestrians in sidewalks at dusk and at night (when most pedestrian accidents in Arlington occur).

THE BELOW BUILDS ON THE ABOVE, MORE GENERAL QUESTIONS TO DRILL DOWN INTO PRIORITIES BY MODE.

BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

An important strategy to reduce car trips and congestion, reduce carbon emissions, and provide a healthy, equitable transportation option is to increase access to bicycle facilities and amenities.



[QUESTION: KEEP THE MAP OR USE AN IMAGE? THE MAP MIGHT BE CONFUSING TO SOME. IT LOOKS LIKE THERE IS MORE THAN THERE REALLY IS AND WOULD REQUIRE A LOT OF EXPLANATION.]

Existing biking infrastructure in Arlington includes the Minuteman Bike Path, the most used bicycle path in the region, connecting residents, workers and visitors to recreation, their homes, workplace, and regional transit. The path serves as the high capacity spine of active east/west connectivity; however, there are few additional dedicated bicycle facilities connecting to the path, or to other areas of town.

Increasing bicycle access is a goal of the plan, but likely to be challenging due to limited right-of-way to accommodate multiple modes on many major connectors or may in some instances only be possible through removal of parking. Given these impediments, adding more lanes will require tradeoffs as to which modes are prioritized on some streets.

To enhance bicycle connectivity, what and how do you think the Town should prioritize to grow the bicycle network. Please rank in order from first preference to last.

- ☐ - Add bicycle lanes (separated and/or protected where possible) along routes able to accommodate them, but only if parking remains.
- ☐ - Add bicycle lanes (separated and/or protected where possible) along routes able to accommodate them, even if that requires the removal of on-street parking.
- ☐ - Paint sharrows on high traffic roads where room is limited for bicycle facilities.

- ☐ Identify neighborhood roadways running parallel to high traffic roads (e.g. Pleasant Street) and designate and sign them as “bike boulevards” – preferred low traffic routes running parallel to high traffic roadways less safe for bicycle travel.
- ☐ Prioritize high quality connections to the Minuteman Bike Path from neighborhood streets wherever possible.

TRANSIT – TOWN INITIATIVES

The Town of Arlington is limited in its ability to affect rapid change for existing and future transit services running to, from and through Arlington. Much of the decision-making is the responsibility of the MBTA, which bases route changes, schedule shifts and capital investments for its entire transit network. And while change does and will occur, it’s often a lengthy process.

There are many strategies the Town of Arlington can implement to enhance the transit experience at a local level. And while all of the below examples are on the table, each comes with its own set of opportunities and challenges.

Please rank in order from 1 to 5 (5 being the lowest choice), what you think the Town should prioritize as a way to enhance transit service for Arlington’s residents, workers and visitors:

- ☐ Advocate for increased bus service and shorter headways (i.e. time between bus arrivals/departures) to provide greater convenience and reduce overcrowding on the most used routes.
- ☐ Provide more comfortable bus stop amenities including larger shelters, seating, real-time information, free wifi and wireless charging (paid for by Arlington, not the T).
- ☐ Extend the bus priority lane in East Arlington to run the entire length of Mass Ave to reduce trip times.
- ☐ Invest in a local Arlington-run transit service to improve connectivity within Arlington and to rail connections outside of Town. (Improving connectivity to connect more residents to Mass Ave business clusters, and to Medford and Belmont commuter rail stations to improve connectivity to North Station, for example.)
- ☐ Invest in additional transit services with nearby towns to provide more transit options to and from Arlington. (One option could be Lexington, which operates the LexExpress to and from Alewife.)

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS

In addition to policies and infrastructure investments to improve accessibility townwide (e.g. ADA compliant pedestrian ramps, traffic signal upgrades, etc.), transit options for persons with disabilities and others with mobility challenges (e.g. the elderly) can be a challenge given the need to provide door-to-door service, particularly in a town like Arlington where topography of steep slopes is an impediment.

With the population aging (in Arlington and regionally), transportation needs will only increase. Currently, the Town’s Council on Aging offers shuttle van services several days a week to nearby shopping destinations, and the MBTA offers the RIDE for persons with disabilities who qualify. While these services are essential and provide a need, they have limitations for those not eligible or for spontaneous, unplanned trips, or trips during “off-hours.”

Many communities are experimenting with new models as complimentary services to more traditional COA shuttles and the RIDE, or replacements. This includes contracting with TNCs (Uber, Lyft) to provide greater convenience; contracting with on-demand micro-transit services, where users order a vehicle over the phone and/or through an app; operating more extensive COA shuttle services; or others.

Which of the below should Arlington prioritize transportation for persons with mobility challenges?

- ☐ - **Enhanced COA Services:** Increase COA van service hours and options to improve local transportation for seniors and persons with mobility challenges.
- ☐ - **TNC Partnerships:** In addition to COA, partner (and potentially subsidize) TNC trips through the COA or another entity to provide on-demand transportation services for persons with disabilities or mobility challenges.
- ☐ - **Micro Transit:** In addition to (or in place of) Council on Aging van services, contract with an on-demand micro transit service to provide greater convenience and flexibility.
- ☐ - **None of the Above:** Continue COA services as currently operating.